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Sustainable development: ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Report of the Second Committee*

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I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 20 (see A/73/538, para. 2). Action on sub-item (i) was taken at the 23rd and 27th meetings, on 8 November and 3 December 2018. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records.[1]

II. Consideration of draft resolutions A/C.2/73/L.40 and A/C.2/73/L.40/Rev.1 and amendments contained in document A/C.2/73/L.60

2. At the 23rd meeting, on 8 November, the representative of Egypt, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all" (A/C.2/73/L.40).

3. At its 27th meeting, on 3 December, the Committee had before it a revised draft resolution (A/C.2/73/L.40/Rev.1), submitted by the sponsors of draft resolution A/C.2/73/L.40.

4. At the same meeting, the representative of Austria, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the European Union, made a

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[1] See A/C.2/73/SR.23 and A/C.2/73/SR.27.

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statement and introduced proposed amendments to draft resolution A/C.2/73/L.40/Rev.1, as contained in document A/C.2/73/L.60.[2]

5. Also at the same meeting, the Committee was informed that the proposed amendments had no programme budget implications.

6. Also at its 27th meeting, the Committee rejected the proposed amendments contained in document A/C.2/73/L.60 by a recorded vote of 122 to 44, with 8 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour:

Albania, Andorra, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of Moldova, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Ukraine, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against:

Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Cambodia, Cameroon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Ghana, Grenada, Guatemala, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Jamaica, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kiribati, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Micronesia (Federated States of), Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nauru, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, South Sudan, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Uganda, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Vanuatu, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Abstaining:

Iceland, Liechtenstein, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Panama, Switzerland, Turkey.

7. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that draft resolution A/C.2/73/L.40/Rev.1 had no programme budget implications.

8. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/73/L.40/Rev.1 (see para. 10).

9. Also at the 27th meeting, statements were made by the representatives of the Russian Federation (also on behalf of Algeria and Turkey), the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the United States of America.

[2] See A/C.2/73/SR.27.

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

10. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolutions 53/7 of 16 October 1998, 54/215 of 22 December 1999, 55/205 of 20 December 2000, 56/200 of 21 December 2001, 58/210 of 23 December 2003, 60/199 of 22 December 2005, 62/197 of 19 December 2007, 64/206 of 21 December 2009, 66/206 of 22 December 2011, 69/225 of 19 December 2014, 70/201 of 22 December 2015, 71/233 of 21 December 2016 and 72/224 of 20 December 2017, as well as its resolutions 65/151 of 20 December 2010 on the International Year of Sustainable Energy for All and 67/215 of 21 December 2012, in which it decided to declare 2014–2024 the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All,

Reaffirming its resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", in which it adopted a comprehensive, far-reaching and people-centred set of universal and transformative Sustainable Development Goals and targets, its commitment to working tirelessly for the full implementation of the Agenda by 2030, its recognition that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is the greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, its commitment to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions — economic, social and environmental — in a balanced and integrated manner, and to building upon the achievements of the Millennium Development Goals and seeking to address their unfinished business,

Reaffirming also its resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, which is an integral part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, supports and complements it, helps to contextualize its means of implementation targets with concrete policies and actions, and reaffirms the strong political commitment to address the challenge of financing and creating an enabling environment at all levels for sustainable development in the spirit of global partnership and solidarity,

Welcoming the Paris Agreement[1] and its early entry into force, and encouraging all its parties to fully implement the Agreement and parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change[2] that have not yet done so to deposit their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, where appropriate, as soon as possible,

Looking forward to the climate summit called for by the Secretary-General, to be held in New York in 2019, to accelerate global action on climate change,

Highlighting the synergies between the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement,

Recalling its resolution 55/2 of 8 September 2000, by which it adopted the United Nations Millennium Declaration, the 2005 World Summit Outcome[3] and the

[1] Adopted under the UNFCCC in FCCC/CP/2015/10/Add.1, decision 1/CP.21.

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 1771, No. 30822.

[3] Resolution 60/1.

outcome document of the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals,[4]

Reaffirming the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development[5] and Agenda 21[6] and the principles set out therein, and recalling the recommendations and conclusions contained in the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg Plan of Implementation)[7] and the outcome documents of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, entitled "The future we want",[8] the third International Conference on Small Island Developing States, entitled "SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway",[9] the second United Nations Conference on Landlocked Developing Countries, entitled "Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024",[10] and the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, entitled "Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020",[11]

Reaffirming also the New Urban Agenda, adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016,[12]

Reaffirming further that each country must take primary responsibility for its own development and that the role of national policies and development strategies cannot be overemphasized in the achievement of sustainable development, and recognizing the need for the creation of an enabling environment at all levels and across all sectors for the achievement of sustainable development,

Emphasizing that universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all is an integral part of poverty eradication and the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and that the increased use and promotion of new and renewable energy, including in off-grid and decentralized systems, and energy efficiency could make a significant contribution in that regard,

Deeply concerned that nearly 2.7 billion people in developing countries, especially in rural areas, rely on traditional biomass, coal and kerosene for cooking and heating, with disproportionate health and workload impacts on women and children, including an estimated 3.8 million deaths annually, that close to 1 billion people are without access to electricity, that Africa accounts for more than half of both access figures and that, even when energy services are available, millions of poor people are unable to pay for them,

Noting with concern that energy represents less than 1 per cent of overall United Nations expenditure on the Sustainable Development Goals, despite its critical importance also in achieving other goals,

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[4] Resolution 65/1.

[5] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3–14 June 1992*, vol. I, *Resolutions Adopted by the Conference* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigendum), resolution 1, annex I.

[6] Ibid., annex II.

[7] *Report of the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg, South Africa, 26 August–4 September 2002* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.03.II.A.1 and corrigendum), chap. I, resolution 2, annex.

[8] Resolution 66/288, annex.

[9] Resolution 69/15, annex.

[10] Resolution 69/137, annex II.

[11] *Report of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, 9–13 May 2011* (A/CONF.219/7), chap. II.

[12] Resolution 71/256, annex.

Expressing concern that, at current rates of progress, none of the global energy targets of the Sustainable Development Goals will be achieved by 2030,

Emphasizing the critical socioeconomic benefits of affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy and the need to reframe the understanding of energy from a technical unit to a requirement for basic social services, economic development and poverty eradication,

Highlighting the importance of the empowerment of developing countries to achieve universal access through the rapid expansion of affordable sustainable energy worldwide,

Recognizing that each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development and that this will include the mobilization of financial resources, as well as capacity-building and the transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed,

Welcoming the significant reductions in the cost of renewable energy, the sector's net positive job contributions and the rapid expansion of renewable energy capacity additions, which are now greater than those of other resources in the electricity sector, and noting that the levelized cost of solar and wind energy in many regions of the world is fully competitive with traditional energy resources,

Taking note of the work of multi-stakeholder partnerships, including Sustainable Energy for All, which has given strong momentum to the promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency, the initiatives of the Global Climate Action Agenda, the Small Island Developing States Lighthouses Initiative, SIDS DOCK, the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation and others that can contribute to reaching the objective of ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all,

Noting with appreciation the work of the International Renewable Energy Agency, which facilitates the widespread and increased adoption and sustainable use of all forms of renewable energy,

Noting with appreciation also that the transformation of the world's energy systems is being accelerated by advances in technology, rapid declines in the cost of renewable energy, the deployment of least-cost decentralized solutions, policy support, new business models and the sharing of best practices, welcoming the establishment of the International Solar Alliance as an international organization, and noting the continuing work of the International Renewable Energy Agency,

Stressing the need for a coherent, integrated approach to energy issues and the promotion of synergies across the global energy agenda, with a focus on eradicating poverty and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals,

Reiterating the pledge that no one will be left behind, reaffirming the recognition that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, and the wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society, and recommitting to endeavour to reach the furthest behind first,

Recommitting to ensuring that no country or person is left behind and to focusing our effort where the challenges are greatest, including by ensuring the inclusion and participation of those who are furthest behind,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;[13]

[13] A/73/267.

2. *Also takes note* of the role and activities of the International Renewable Energy Agency, encouraging the Agency to continue to support its members in the achievement of their renewable energy objectives, as well as the contributions of the International Solar Alliance, and encourages its work to collectively address key common challenges to the scaling-up of solar energy;

3. *Strongly encourages* Governments and other relevant stakeholders to take actions to achieve universal access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, increase the global share of new and renewable energy, improve the inclusion of developing countries in energy sector cooperation, where relevant, and increase the rate of improvement in energy efficiency for a clean, low-emission, low-carbon, climate-resilient, safe, efficient, modern, affordable and sustainable energy system, given the systemic sustainable development benefits, while taking into consideration the diversity of national situations, priorities, policies, specific needs and challenges and capacities of developing countries, including their energy mix and energy systems;

4. *Calls for* ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, as such services are an integral part of poverty eradication measures, human dignity, quality of life, economic opportunity, the combating of inequality, the promotion of health and the prevention of morbidity and mortality, access to education, safe drinking water and sanitation, food security, disaster risk reduction and resilience, climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental impact reduction, social inclusion and gender equality, including for persons affected by humanitarian emergencies;

5. *Underscores* the importance of access to cleaner and more efficient and sustainable cooking and heating methods, welcomes ongoing efforts, and in this regard calls for the promotion of an enabling environment at the national and international levels for the increased usage of sustainable, cleaner and more efficient cooking and heating methods in all countries, in particular developing countries;

6. *Encourages* Governments, the United Nations system and relevant stakeholders to leverage the cost-competitiveness of renewable energy, especially in off-grid areas, in order to achieve universal energy access, such as by establishing policy frameworks for metering and payment systems, requiring cost comparisons between grid extension and off-grid solutions, facilitating investment by domestic and foreign banks and educating students, communities, investors and entrepreneurs on renewable energy, energy efficiency and conservation, among other activities, where feasible and appropriate;

7. *Calls upon* Governments to expand the use of renewable energy beyond the power sector, taking into account national priorities and constraints, to industry, heating and cooling, construction and infrastructure and, in particular, the transport sector, including through sustainable sector coupling, in the context of sustainable development, including climate change, and calls for supportive policy initiatives and investments at the national and international levels;

8. *Recognizes* that current global progress in improving energy efficiency falls well below the pace necessary to double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency by 2030, and encourages, in accordance with national laws and regulations, the promotion of widespread energy efficiency initiatives in all economic sectors, the adoption and updating of building performance codes and standards, energy efficiency labelling, the promotion of energy management systems, the retrofitting of existing buildings and public procurement policies on energy, among other modalities, as appropriate, as well as the prioritization of smart grid systems, district energy systems and community energy plans to improve synergies among clean and effective use of traditional resources, renewable energy and energy efficiency, which

aim to promote the interconnectivity of clean and renewable energy infrastructure and improve energy efficiency;

9. *Calls for* strengthened cooperation at the regional level to promote innovation and facilitate financing, support regional cross-border power grid connectivity, as appropriate, to advance economic integration and sustainable development and share best practices that are responsive to regional needs with regard to Sustainable Development Goal 7[14] and its interlinkages with the other Sustainable Development Goals;

10. *Calls upon* Governments, as well as relevant international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders, to combine, as appropriate, the increased use of new and renewable energy resources, more efficient use of energy, greater reliance on advanced energy technologies, including cleaner fossil fuel technologies, and the sustainable use of traditional energy resources;

11. *Encourages* Governments, relevant international and regional organizations and other relevant stakeholders to promote investments in developing sustainable, inclusive and equitable energy systems, including, inter alia, by strengthening energy systems through cross-border grid connections, as appropriate, and to consider incorporating decentralized renewable energy solutions in energy planning, as appropriate, and recognizes that energy transition will take different paths in different parts of the world;

12. *Also encourages* Governments, relevant international organizations and other relevant stakeholders to use and promote an integrated resource planning and management approach in their energy strategies that considers energy choices in the context of linked sectors, inter alia, water, waste, air quality and food, taking into account national circumstances;

13. *Recognizes* that sustainable energy access and its deployment can be both improved and accelerated by gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and calls upon Governments, the United Nations development system and other stakeholders to increase educational and capacity-building programmes for women in the sector, further advance equal pay and leadership and other opportunities for women in the energy sector, promote women's full, equal and effective participation and leadership in the design and implementation of energy policies and programmes, mainstream a gender perspective in such policies and programmes and ensure women's full and equal access to and use of sustainable energy to enhance their economic and social empowerment, including employment and other income-generating opportunities;

14. *Encourages* Governments, with the support of relevant stakeholders, as appropriate, to accelerate the transition towards sustainable economies, according to national policies and plans, through mitigation and adaptation strategies that improve energy efficiency and create more and better employment opportunities for all, including young people, in wage and self-employment;

15. *Emphasizes* the potential of sustainable energy use to contribute to climate change mitigation and adaptation, recognizes that increasing the deployment of renewable energy and enhancing energy efficiency are components of many countries' nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change,[1] and urges effective and timely support for the full implementation of those contributions, as applicable;

[14] See resolution 70/1.

16. *Notes* that the impacts of climate change can also threaten access to and the supply of energy, and also notes the importance of increasing the resilience of the energy sector to climate change, which can be facilitated by the expansion of renewable energy;

17. *Emphasizes*, while noting progress, that the large-scale deployment of technologies has been insufficient and uneven and that support is required to realize their potential, along with appropriate policy initiatives and investments at the national and international levels, with Governments working in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, including the private sector;

18. *Also emphasizes* the value of regional and interregional approaches, which can, among other advantages, enhance the deployment of renewable and sustainable energy by facilitating the sharing of experiences, reduce transaction costs, leverage economies of scale, enable greater cross-border interconnectivity to promote energy system reliability and resilience and augment domestic capacity-building, and recognizes the work of organizations and initiatives in that regard;

19. *Invites* all relevant funding institutions and bilateral and multilateral donors, as well as regional funding institutions, the private sector and non-governmental organizations, to continue ongoing efforts and take further action to provide financial resources, as appropriate, to support efforts aimed at ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy in developing countries and countries with economies in transition, including low-emission, low-carbon and climate-resilient new and renewable resources of energy of demonstrated viability, especially focused on energy access and economic development in both urban and rural areas, while noting the potential catalytic effect of concessional and other finance and taking fully into account the development structure of energy-based economies of developing countries;

20. *Encourages* the development, dissemination, diffusion and transfer of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed, and highlights the importance of integrating sustainable energy in the Technology Facilitation Mechanism;

21. *Stresses* the importance of strategies and contributions by Governments and relevant stakeholders to multi-stakeholder partnerships in ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, and encourages coordination and collaboration between the United Nations and relevant multi-stakeholder partnerships, such as Sustainable Energy for All;

22. *Recognizes* the catalytic effect of the sharing of knowledge and experience, capacity-building and technical assistance on sustainable energy deployment, and encourages existing and new efforts to enable Governments from developing countries and relevant stakeholders to plan, finance, implement and monitor sustainable energy projects to further strengthen their national institutions and capacities;

23. *Encourages* the development of viable market-oriented strategies that could result in further rapid reductions in the cost of new and renewable resources of energy and could further increase the competitiveness of those technologies, including through the adoption, as appropriate, of public policies for research, development and market deployment, including rationalizing inefficient fossil fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances;

24. *Emphasizes* the value of education, academia, technology and entrepreneurship to develop solutions to face energy challenges and achieve energy

sustainability, as well as the importance of investing in research and development in sustainable energy technologies, and also emphasizes in this context the urgent need to enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to upgraded technologies and improved infrastructures for supplying affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all;

25. *Calls for* national efforts to promote access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all and strengthened local engagement to complement current approaches, and reaffirms the commitment to supporting subnational and local efforts, taking advantage of their direct control, where applicable, of local infrastructure and codes to foster uptake in end-use sectors, such as residential, commercial and industrial buildings, industry, agriculture, transport, waste and sanitation;

26. *Encourages* the Secretary-General to continue efforts to promote the provision of stable, adequate and predictable financial resources and technical assistance for sustainable energy and to enhance the effectiveness, coordination and full utilization of appropriate international funds for the effective implementation of national and regional high-priority projects for ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all, and in this regard invites the Secretary-General, within existing resources, to convene dialogues, which could consist of a series of events, including discussions among energy policymakers and other stakeholders, in 2019, to be supported by the Secretariat, in order to discuss the implementation of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, including the global plan of action for the Decade, as described in the report of the Secretary-General, the summary of the deliberations of which would be incorporated into the report on the implementation of the present resolution;

27. *Encourages* the entities of the United Nations development system, within their respective mandates and taking into account the need to improve coordination among them, in the context of the implementation of resolutions 71/243 of 21 December 2016 and 72/279 of 31 May 2018, to assist countries, in particular at the country level, upon request by their Governments, by explicitly leveraging partnerships with other international organizations, donors and relevant stakeholders, including in their efforts to achieve universal access to sustainable energy and to accelerate its deployment,

28. *Calls upon* the relevant organizations of the United Nations system, within their respective mandates and resources, to ensure that no one is left behind and no country is left behind in the implementation of the present resolution;

29. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General to promote renewable energy, energy efficiency and related sustainable practices in all United Nations facilities and operations around the world, set implementation targets and timelines by the end of 2019, building on and avoiding duplication with existing initiatives, and report on progress, within the most relevant existing reporting frameworks;

30. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its seventy-fourth session a report on the implementation of the present resolution, including activities carried out to mark the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All, and decides to include in the provisional agenda of its seventy-fourth session, under the item entitled "Sustainable development", the sub-item entitled "Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all".